

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With the Progressive Caucus

August 2, 1993

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, could you clarify U.S. policy towards Bosnia? Is the U.S. prepared to unilaterally use military force to break the siege of Sarajevo and get humanitarian supplies in? Or will it work only in conjunction with the NATO allies?

The President. Well, let me say, I think the stories this morning perhaps exaggerate our position a bit. Our position is we are working with the allies. We're going to try to work through to a common position. We believe we will be able to work through to a common position. And I don't think it serves much of a purpose to speculate what might otherwise happen.

I don't believe that the allies will permit Sarajevo to either fall or to starve. I just don't believe that will happen. So I think we'll have a common position. There are some concerns; there always have been by those who have forces on the ground there, particularly those in the exposed positions. And I think we'll work it through, and I want the talks to continue. My goal has always been to work with them and to proceed together, and I think we'll be able to do that.

Q. Are you concerned about the reports that the talks may be delayed because the Bosnians expect you to come in on their side militarily?

The President. No, I don't think that will happen. Let me say this: I think peace has been delayed by the reverse perception that because the allies have not done anything to try to stabilize the position. The situation has until very recently gotten much worse since they were all in Athens talking—because the allies did nothing. Now, I think it's getting a little better again because, in part, because we're talking about what ought to be done for humanitarian reasons and to protect our own forces there, the U.N. forces.

So I'm very hopeful. I think they've made real progress in the peace talks, and I'm hopeful that will go on. I don't think the Bosnian Government will pull back.

Economic Program

Q. Are you going to win?

The President. America is going to win. Not me, it's not about me; it's about the country.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:14 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Interview With Newspaper Editors

August 2, 1993

The President. Hello?

Senator Herb Kohl

Q. Mr. President, I want to give you the first question and to point out that the attention you've given our Senator Herb Kohl in the last couple of days has raised his level of notoriety to a point that he hasn't known since he was elected. Now, I know you wouldn't trade a vote, but is there anything that you and Senator Kohl mutually want in terms of legislation or other benefits for Wisconsin that you have an interest in?

The President. The main thing that Senator Kohl was concerned about—he was interested in two things, to be fair, and there was—in the national interest. One was to minimize the burden on middle class taxpayers. And when he looked at the whole package and saw that working families with incomes under \$30,000 were held harmless and that working families with incomes of \$50,000 and \$60,000 were looking at a \$33-a-year burden with the spending cuts, I think that really made a big difference to him.

The other thing that he was interested in that I think is certainly as significant over the long run is he wanted a program that had some real economic growth incentives, that had some business help in it. And this program does a lot for small businesses. Over 90 percent of the small businesses in the country are eligible for a tax reduction if they reinvest more money in their businesses. It does more for research and development. It does more for revitalizing homebuilding and real estate. It does more across a whole range